

HERITAGE NETWORK



**Land Opposite
96-102 LEMS福德 LANE,
Welwyn, Herts.**

HN597

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land Opposite
96-102 LEMS福德 LANE
Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

HN597

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of McCann Homes Ltd

By

David Kaye, BA PIFA

Report no.391

March 2007

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11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH SG6 1UJ
TEL: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Kaye, Geoff Saunders & Chris Turner. The report text and illustrations were prepared by David Kaye, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Kevin Sutton and Martin Brooks of McCann Homes Ltd., and Andy Instone, Historic Environment Unit, HCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land Opposite 96 – 102 Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Welwyn Hatfield
Village/town:	Welwyn Garden City	Parish:	Non Civil Parish
Planning reference:	6/05/1517	NGR:	TL 22786 11764
Client name and address:	McCann Homes Ltd (Eastern Region), Arden Press House, Arden Press Way, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 1LH		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Former land use:	Industrial
Site status:	AAS 11	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c.4713m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.1562m ²
Site Code:	HN597	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Mill Green Museum, Hatfield
Start of work	14/08/2006	Finish of work	01/11/2006
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	None
Oasis UID	heritage1-24749	Significant finds:	No significant finds
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In response to a condition on the planning permission for the construction of new housing at the Land Opposite 96 – 102 Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by McCann Homes Ltd to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the development groundworks.

The site appears to have been heavily truncated, probably during the construction of the former buildings which previously stood on the site. No archaeological cut features or deposits were revealed during the programme of groundworks, and no unstratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil.

Despite the site's proximity to known Iron Age archaeology at Stanborough School, 100m to the southeast, no features from this or any other period were encountered during this project.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *McCann Homes Ltd*, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of groundworks for a development site located on land opposite 96 – 102 Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. The planning permission for the development (ref. 6/05/1517), granted by Welwyn Hatfield District Council (WHDC) was subject to a standard archaeological condition, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work followed the *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* issued by the *County Archaeology Office* (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to WHDC. A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated May 2006.

1.2 The site is located 400m north east of the River Lea, at the south western limits of Welwyn Garden City, centred on NGR TL 22786 11764 (Figure 1). Welwyn Garden City was constructed as a new town based on the ideals of the Garden City Movement during the first half of the 20th century. The development proposes the demolition of the existing workshops and construction of 21 residential units with associated parking spaces, access, a new footpath and landscaping (Figure 2).

1.3 The study area lies within Area of Archaeological Significance no.11 (AAS11), as designated in the WHDC District Local Plan. This notes that there is Iron Age activity, including evidence of occupation within the vicinity of Stanborough School. On this basis it was considered that there was a moderate risk that features and deposits dating to the prehistoric period onwards might be encountered during the development.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might have been uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000), and subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.5 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with Mill Green Museum, Hatfield, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 The site lies on a southwest side of the Welwyn Garden City plateau overlooking the River Lea. The ground level is approximately 82.5mOD, rising gently by 2.5m from the southeast to the northwest. Formerly, the land was mostly occupied by light industrial units.

METHODOLOGY

2.2 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to supervise the excavation of the footings and drainage trenches.

2.3 The machining was undertaken using tracked 360° diggers fitted with toothed buckets of various widths, as required.

2.4 Spoil from the various stages of the groundworks was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.5 The project has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Design Brief, and with the Heritage Network's approved Project Design.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Ground Reduction

2.6 Ground reduction was carried out on two areas of the site, the access road and the car park (Figure 3) (Plate 1). The access road was reduced by up to 0.7m through made ground, exposing patches of the natural geology. This consisted of a yellowish red (5YR 5/6) hoggin.

2.7 The stratigraphy of the car park area appears to be undisturbed, consisting of 0.2m very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay top soil, overlying 0.25m dark yellowish brown silty clay subsoil, which has frequent flint inclusions. This overlies the natural hoggin.

2.8 The northeast corner of the site, where the car park is located, encroaches on to a small patch of well-established woodland, and consequently had remained outside the footprint of previous developments.

2.9 The whole of this area was reduced to the level of the hoggin and some landscaping was subsequently required to level the surface. No archaeological cut features or deposits were encountered in this area.

Footings Trenches

2.10 The layout of the footings trenches is shown in Figure 3. The excavation of most of the footings trenches was observed. However, due an oversight on the part of the clients, Plots 9-22 were not monitored (Figure 4). The depth of the trenches varied between 0.9m and 1.3m, cutting through made ground, and up to 0.5m into the natural geology.

2.11 All the observed footings trenches were cut through the same stratigraphy, the only variation being the depth of the overburden (Plate 2).

2.12 No archaeological cut features or deposits were revealed in the footings trenches and no unstratified artefacts recovered from the spoil. It is not considered likely that any significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were lost during the groundworks for plots 9-22.

Drainage trenches

2.13 All drainage trenches which breached the overburden were inspected. They were all located either in the access road or to the west of it.

2.14 The largest of the drainage trenches was dug to accommodate a pre-fabricated, 1050mm concrete storage pipe and its associated manholes. It was located in the centre of the access road in a trench which was 2m wide by approximately 2m deep. The access road had previously been reduced exposing the interface between the overburden and the natural. The excavation of this trench revealed no archaeological cut features or deposits.

2.15 The remaining deep drainage trenches provided services to the western range of buildings (Plots 7 to 22). The main trench, to the north of the Plots 7 to 16, was up to 1.5m in depth and cut into the natural geology by up to 0.5m. A drainage and cabling trench was dug to the south of these plots to depth of 1m, cutting into the natural by 0.3m. No archaeological cut features or deposits were encountered, and no unstratified finds were evident in the spoil.

2.16 Plots 17 to 22 were served by a trench running parallel to their frontage and connected to the main pipe in the access road. It was up to 1m in depth and cut the natural geology by 0.3m. An additional trench linking the connecting trench to the drainage and cabling trench running to the south of Plots 7 to 16 was also excavated.

3. Discussion

3.1 The aim of the present project was to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which might be uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with the current published regional research agenda.

3.2 The site is situated within Area of Archaeological Significance no.11 (AAS11), as designated in the WHDC District Local Plan. Iron Age activity, including evidence of occupation, has been noted within the vicinity of Stanborough School, approximately 100m to the southeast. Therefore, it was considered that the site had the potential to extend our understanding of the development of the area in the Iron Age, and other periods.

3.3 The stratigraphy observed during the groundworks shows that the site has been heavily truncated. The natural geology underlies a layer of made ground and topsoil. This probably represents landscaping of the site which may have been carried out during the construction of the workshops that were demolished to accommodate the present development.

3.4 Despite the site's close proximity to documented archaeology, no features or deposits from any period were encountered. No unstratified artefacts were recovered from the spoil from any part of the site.

3.5 Due to an oversight on the part of the clients, some of the footings trenches were not monitored. However, the ground reduction for the access road provided a record of a broad section of the site's stratigraphy running north to south. The drainage trenches which served the western range of units also gave a clear indication of the stratigraphy in an east to west direction.

3.6 The footprint of the workshops which previously occupied the site coincided with that of Plots 9-20 (Figure 5). It is likely that the depth of the footings for this building would have destroyed all but the deepest cut features which may have been present.

3.7 The absence of any archaeological features, deposits or artefacts across the whole site supports the suggestion that the unmonitored area was probably archaeologically sterile, and the likelihood that significant features were missed is low.

Confidence Rating

3.8 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally good for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.9 With the exception of the matter of the unmonitored footings, discussed above, there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
14/08/06	DGK	2	Introductory meeting
15/08/06	DGK	4	Monitor access road strip
17/08/06	DGK	10	Monitor access road strip
18/08/06	DGK	9	Monitor access road & car park strip
21/08/06	GIS	2	Inspect drainage
22/08/06	GIS	1	Inspect drainage
23/08/06	GIS	5	Monitor car park reduction
06/09/06	GIS	3	Monitor manhole pit
08/09/06	DGK	2	Monitor drainage
18/09/06	CT	2	Monitor footings
19/09/06	DGK	3	Monitor footings
19/09/06	DGK	2	Monitor footings
21/09/06	DGK	1	Monitor footings
31/10/06	DGK	9	Monitor drainage & footings
01/11/06	DGK	3	Inspect cable trenches

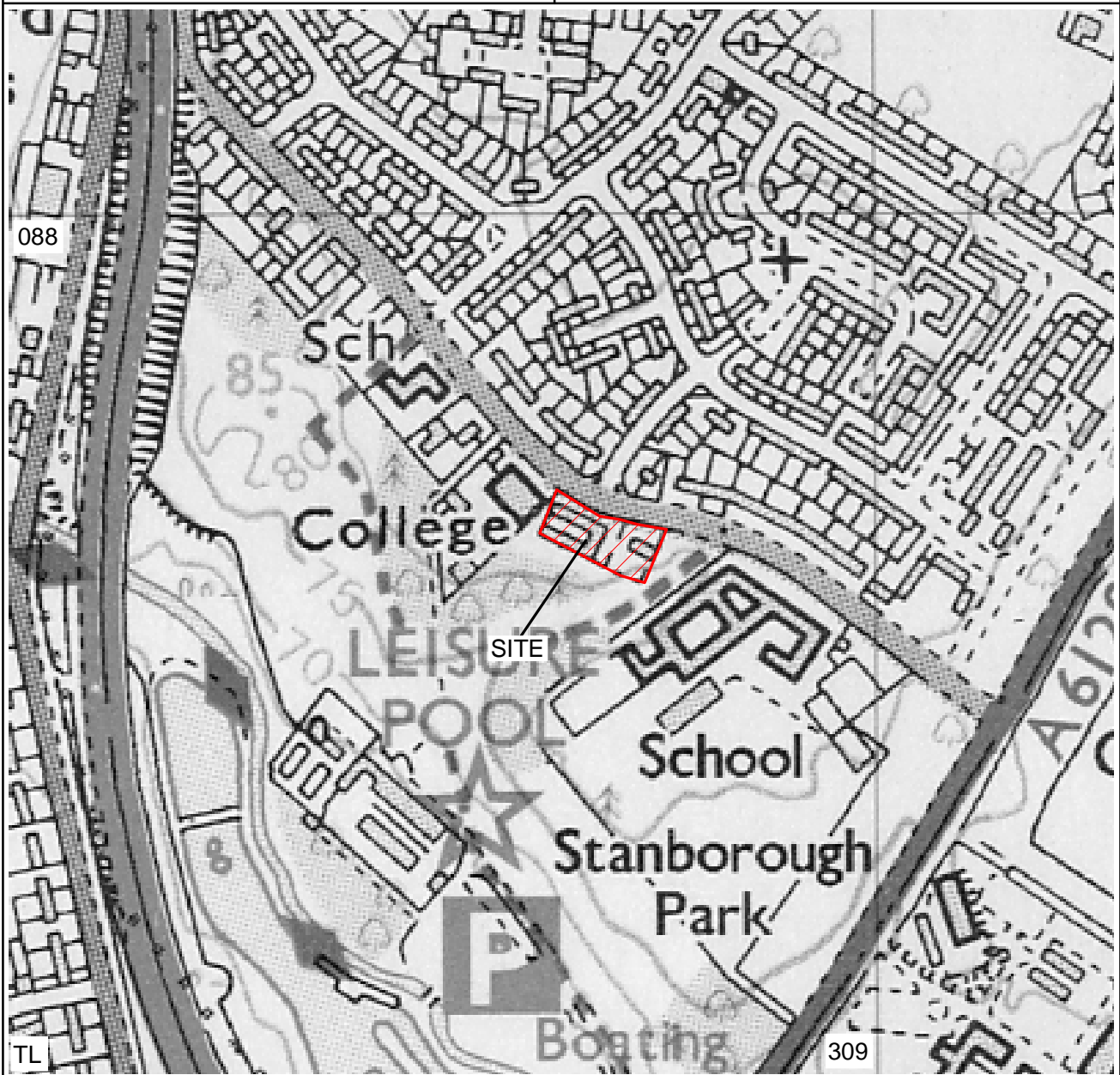
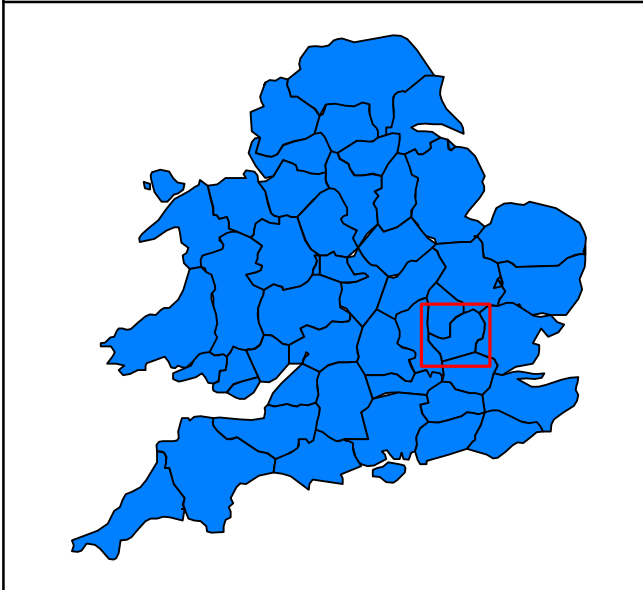
5. Bibliography

Turner, C, 2006 *Land Opposite 96-102 Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Monitoring*. Heritage Network.

6. Illustrations & Plates

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Site Layout
Figure 3	Site Geology and Features Location
Figure 4	Trench Section
Figure 5	Workshop Footprint and Unmonitored Footings
Plate 1	Car park area after ground reduction
Plate 2	Indicative stratigraphy

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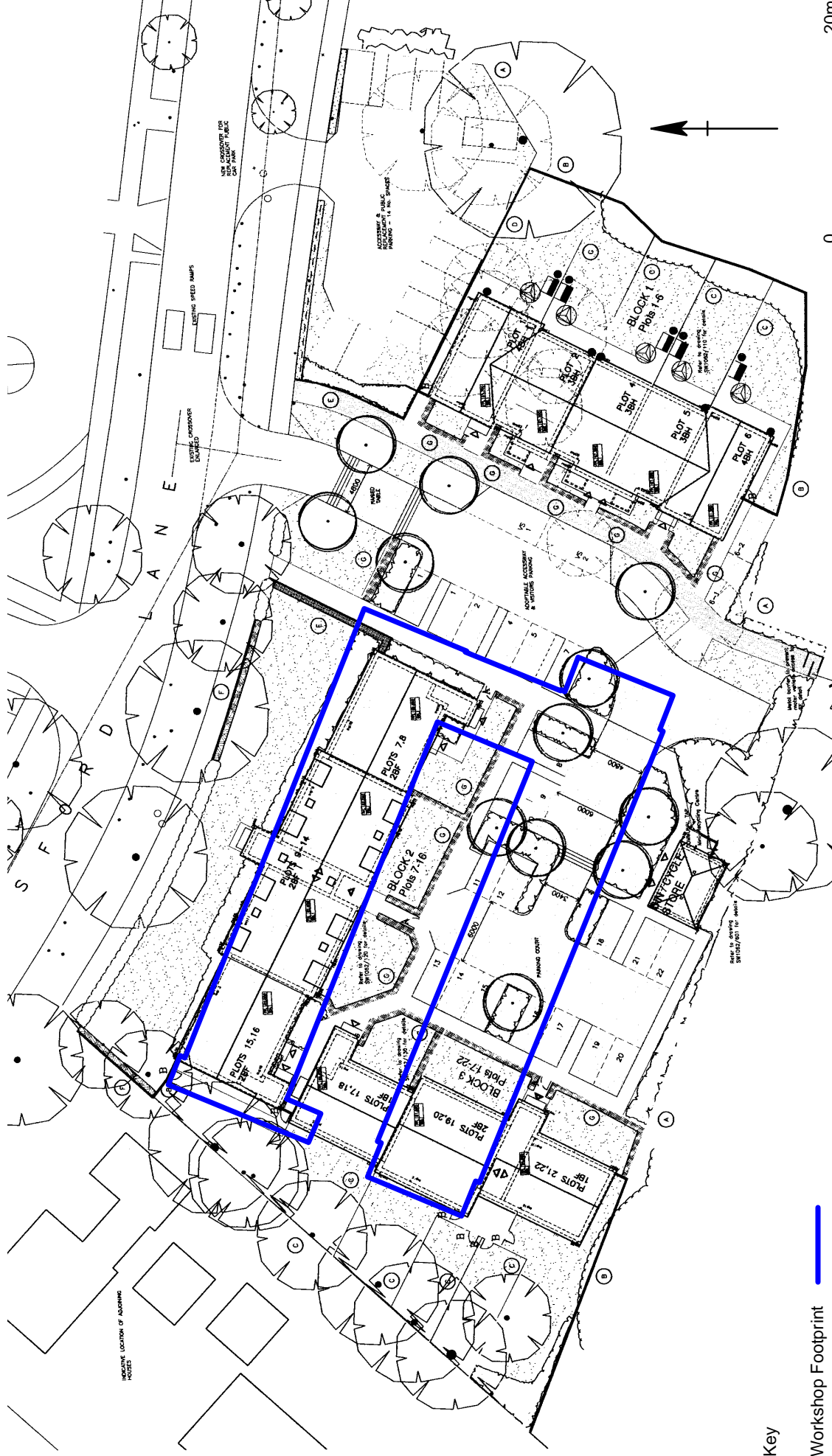


<p style="text-align: center;">Site Location</p> <p><small>Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL10001486</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Scale 1:5000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 1</p>
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Land Opposite 96-102 Lemsford Lane,
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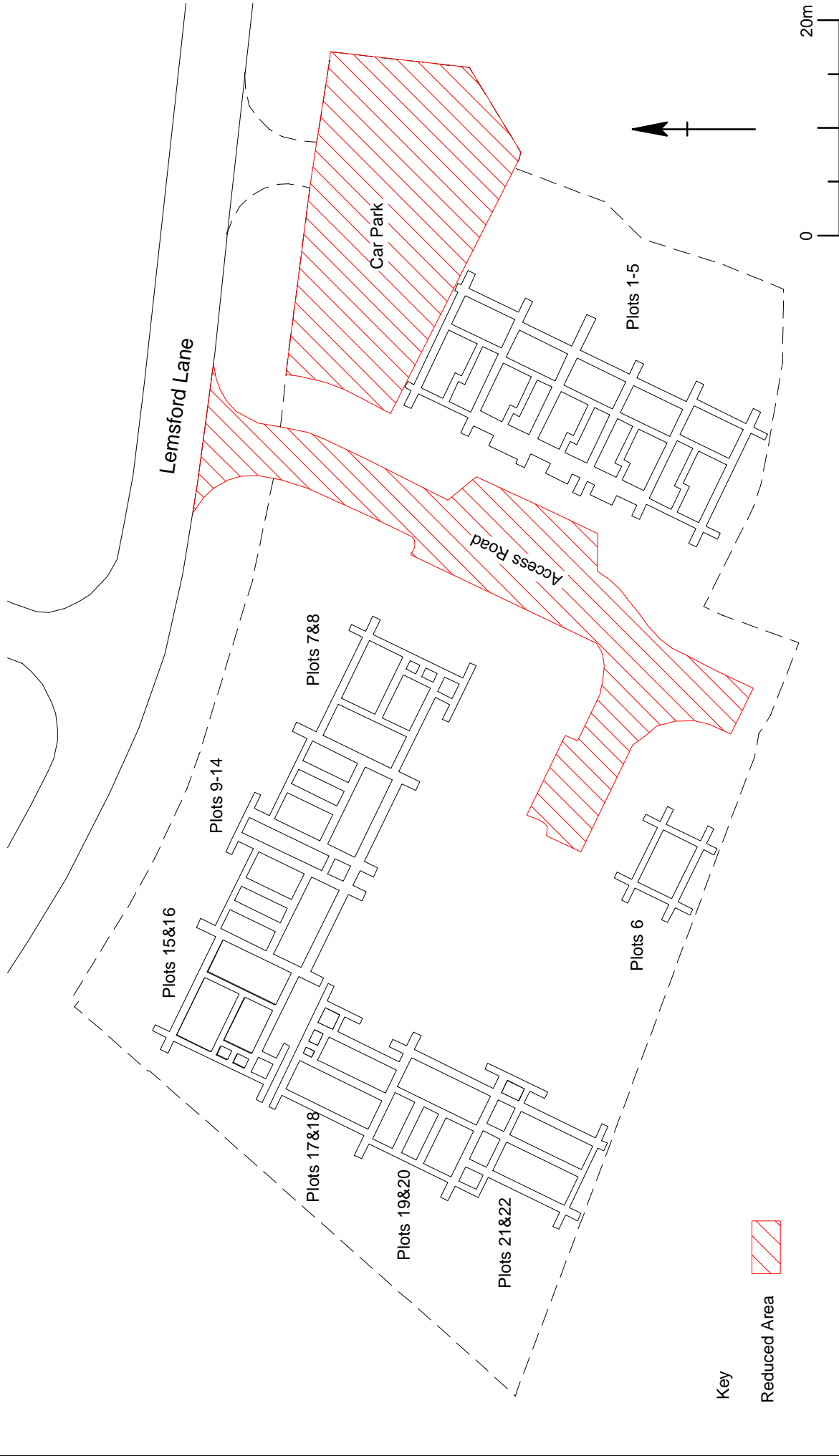
Key

Workshop Footprint ———

Proposed Development

Scale 1:500

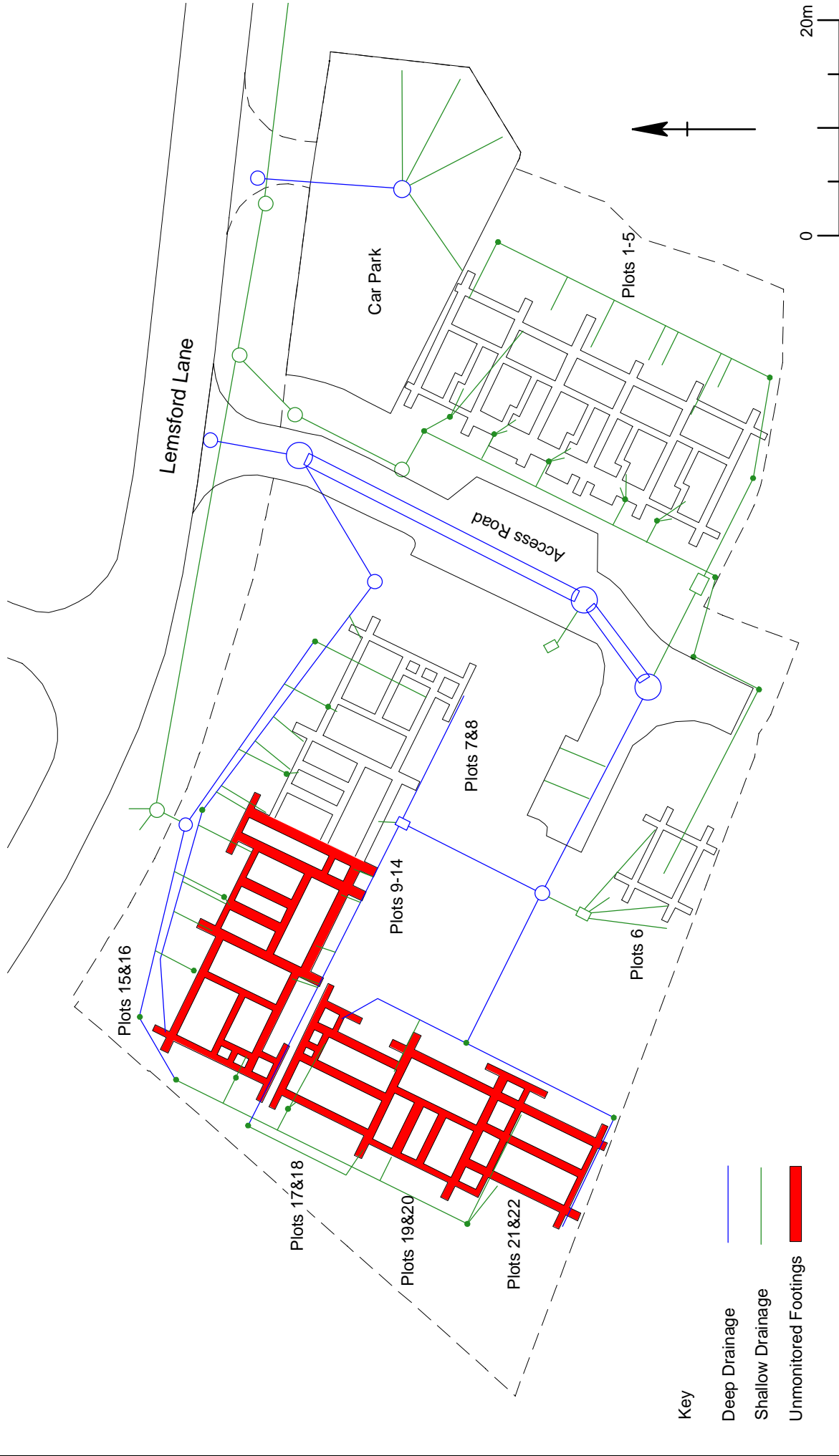
Figure 2



Footings Layout & Ground Reduction

Scale 1:500

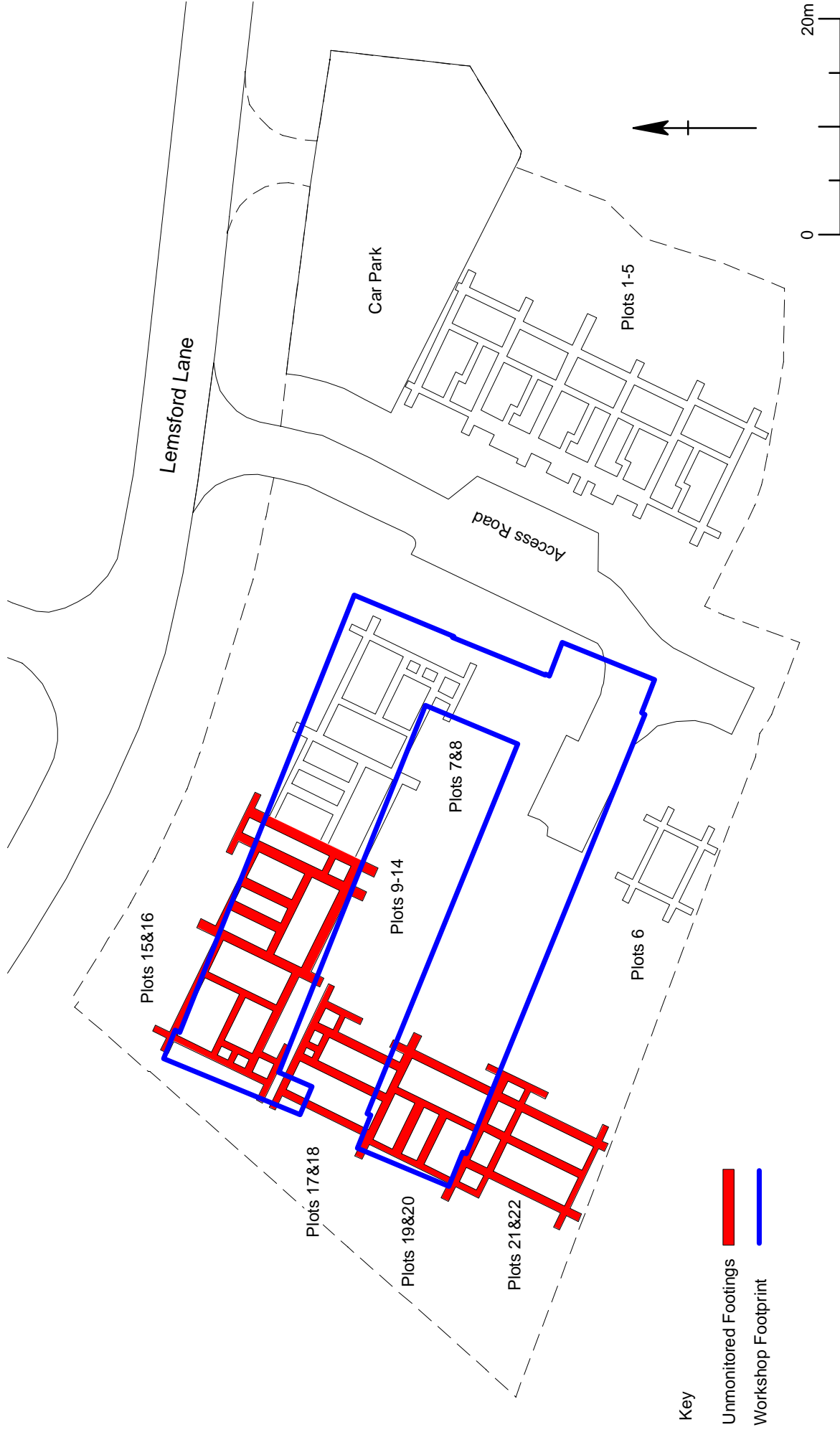
Figure 3



Drainage Layout and Unmonitored Footings

Scale 1:500

Figure 4



Key

Unmonitored Footprints

Workshop Footprint

Workshop Footprint and Unmonitored Footprints

Scale 1:500

Figure 5



Plate 1: Car park area after ground reduction, looking north



Plate 2: Indicative stratigraphy from car park